

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 031049Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7782

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 2374

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MASS JO MO

SUBJECT: TRANSFER OF F5A AIRCRAFT FROM JORDAN TO MOROCCO

REF: AMMAN 2334(NOTAL)

1. REFTEL REPORTED KING HUSSEIN LESS COMMITTED THAN
BEFORE TO TRANSFER OF AIRCRAFT TO MOROCCO, BUT HE WANTS
USG TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DECISION NOT TO GO
THROUGH WITH TRANSFERS. KING HUSSEIN SECOND THOUGHTS
ABOUT DEAL POSSIBLY RELATED TO RECENT PROSPECT OF NOW
REPLACEMENTS FROM GOM IF JAORANS AIRCRAFT DAMAGED
CHANGED PERSPECTIVE OF RELATIVE URGENCY OVER PAST FEW
MONTHS AS SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE HAS SETTLED DOWN AND
ARAB ISRAELI AND INTRA ARAB CONFLICTS WITH CONTINUED
UNCERTAINTIES AND DANGERS, RJAF COMMANDERS OPPOSITION
AND NEED FOR AIRCRAFT TO MEET LOCAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
AND OBVIOUS IRONY OF KING GIVING UP 25-30 PERCENT
OF HIS AIR FORCE AT TIME WHEN PRESENT HAWK MISSILE
PROBLEMS AND PENDING SOVIET CONTACTS FORCUS ATTENTION
ON KINGS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MODERN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM
FOR JORDAN. AT SAME TIME KINGS STANDING AND
CREDIBILITY WITH CONSERVATIVE MANARCHAL WING OF
ARAB STATES AND WHAT HE UNDERSTANDS IS POSSIBLY SHAH'S
WISH FOR TRANSFER LEAD HIM TO VIEW HE CANNOT RENEGE
ON DEAL NOW ON HIS OWN.

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2. IF US WERE TO TURN DOWN REQUEST FOR TRANSFER WE
WOULD HELP KING HUSSEIN OVER HIS DILEMMA BUT NO DOUBT
OPEN OURSELVES TO CRITICISM IN RABAT AND PERHAPS TEHRAN.
ON THE OTHER HAND TO GO FORWARD AND CONCUR IN TRANSFER
WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT JORDANS MILITARY CAPABILITY AND
RJAF TRAINING PROGRAMS MIGHT WELL PRECIPITATE HIGH
LEVEL RESIGNATIONS AND OTHER DISSENT WITHIN RJAF BE
UNTIMELY NOW IN MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WHICH IS
EXPERIENCING SOME NEW INSTABILITIES AND OPEN DOOR
FOR KING TO ARGUE HE NEEDS USSR AIRCRAFT TO RENEW
AND STRENGTHEN HIS AIR FORCE. LATTER IF CONSUMATED
COULD SPUR CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM AND ATTACKS
ON TRADITIONAL US ASSISTANCE FOR JORDAN

3. WITH ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND EMBASSY
SEES FOLLOWING OPTIONS

A. GO THROUGH WITH CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST AND
GIVE AUTHORITY FOR TRANSFER. IN THAT EVENT WE BELIEVE
KING HUSSEIN WOULD TRANSFER THE AIRCRAFT WITH ADVERSE
CONSEQUENCES ALREADY MENTIONED.

B. GO THROUGH WITH CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST BUT
ONCE OBTAINED HOLD TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION IN
ABEYANCE WITH ARGUMENT THAT SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE
QUIETED DOWN RELATIVE TO DANGERS IN MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS
IN VIEW OF IMPENDING MAY UNDOF RENEWAL PROBLEM INCREASING
TENSION ON WEST BANK STILL SHORT FUSE IN LEBANON.
THAT APPROACH (PLUS ARGUMENT THAT IT REDUCED JORDANS
AIRCRAFT REQUIREMENT FOR POSSIBLE SOVIET AIRCRAFT)
MIGHT REDUCE CRITICISM IN RABAT (AND TEHRAN) OF REFUSAL
TO GIVE TRANSFER AUTHORITY NOW. HOWEVER BY LEAVING
IT UP TO US TO DECIDE WHEN CONDITIONS OF MOROCCO
ALGERIA DISPUTE WARRANT AIRCRAFT TRANSFER THAT OPTION
WOULD INJECT US JUDGMENTALLY INTO SUBSTANCE OF MOROCCO
ALGERIA DISPUTE IN WAY WE HAVE NOT BEEN BEFORE.

C. GO THROUGH WITH CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST BUT
APPROVE ACTUAL TRANSFER OF ONLY TEN OF GOJ'S TWENTY
F5A AIRCRAFT FOR TIME BEING (HOLDING THE OTHER TEN
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FOR POSSIBLE LATER TRANSFER) WITH ARGUMENT THAT MOROCCAN
ABSORPTION CAPACITY AND RELATIVE TEMPERATURES OF MOROCCO
ALGERIA AND ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICTS NOW WARRANT THAT BALANCE
SUCH AS APPROACH WOULD GO FAR TOWARD ALLOWING KING TO KEEP
HIS CREDIBILITY AMONG HIS ARAB FRIENDS, PRESERVE FOR
MOROCCO SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE OF ARMS TRANSFER AND
DELIVER TO RABAT NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT THAT IS NOW AS
FAR BEYOND ITS CAPACITY TO ABSORB AS WOULD BE TWENTY

TOTAL OF 26 IF IRANIAN F-5A INCLUDED.
MOREOVER THAT SOLUTION STANDS BETTER CHANGE OF BEING
ACCEPTED BY RJAF LEADERS WOULDNOT DISRUPT RJAR
TRAINING PROGRAM AND IT WOULD OFFER SOMEWHAT LESS RATIONALE
THAN WOULD TWENCY AIRCRAFT TRANSFER FOR GOJ TO ARGUE
PRESSING NEED FOR OTHER AIRACRAFT WOULD REDUCE EXPOSURE TO
QUESTIONING WHY JORDAN SHOULD CONTINUE TO RECEIVE
GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHEN IT "GIVES AWAY
EXPENSIVE WEAPONRY")

D. ITHDRAW CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST AND REFUSE
TRANSFER THAT THIS TIME. EMBASSY ASSUMES SUCH BLATANT
QUUREFUSAL ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING EARLIER INDICATIONS OF
APPROVAL, WOULD BE TOO COSTLY TO OUR INTERESTS IN
RABAT(AND TEHRAN,) IT WOULD ALSO UNDERMING KING
HUSSEIN' PSOTION IN MOROCCO IRAN AND MAYBE AMONG
ARAB PENINSULA MONARCHIES.

4. ON BLANCE EMBASSY WOULD RECOMMEND OPTION "CHARLIES"
HOWEVER SOME UNKNOWS OF SITUATION REMAIN OR MIGHT
RISE TO IMPORTANCE AS TIME GOES BY. ALTHOUGH MOROCCAN
AMBASSADOR IN AMMAN SAYS HE RECEIVES SEVERAL TELEPHONE
CALLS A WEKK FROM RABAT (HE SAID THREE CALL FROM
KING HASSAN DIRECTLY) ON STATUS OF WEAPONS TRANSFERS, WE
WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY RABAT'S UNDATE OF GOM'S SENSE
OF URGENCY TODAY IN RECEICING GOJS F5A AIRACRAFT.
SIMILARLY WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY TEHRAN'S REACTION
TO KING HUSSEINS INDICATION THAT SHAH PRESSING HIM
TO TRANSFER MOROCCO THE TWENTY F5A AIRCRAFT THAT
JORDAN RECEIVED AS GIFT FROM IRAN. (ONE INTERESTING
REPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED IS THAT SITUATION IS REVERSED
AND SHAH SCOLDED KING FOR AGREEING TO TRANSFER OF
AIRCRAFT WHICH MADE KING MAD.)

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5. IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUINGS DIFFICULTY OBER THE
HAWK ISSUES AND FACT THAT THIS ISSUE COULD
INTERTWINCE IN NON PRODUCTIVE WAY RECOMMENDED TACTICAL
APPROCH IS THA WE NOT RPT NOT GO FORWARD
WITH PRESENTATIONS TO CONGRESS OF AIRCRAFT TRANSFER PACKAGE
AT LEAST UNTIL WE SEE HOW HAWK ISSUE WILL TURN OUT, AND UNTIL
DEPARTMENT HAS HAD A CHANCE TO REVIEW ABOVE PROPOSALS
AND RECEIVE ANY REACTION FROM RABAT AND TEHRAN.

PICKERING

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